

Community Forest Management Plan Committee

March 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Town of Barre Community Forest Management Plan Committee will hold a Public Meeting on Monday, March 27, 2023, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Conference Room #3 at the Municipal Building, 149 Websterville Road. Committee members present included: David Rouleau, Lori Bernier (remotely), Larry Rogacki, Jim West, Patty Meriam (remote), Josh Howard, and Dean Preston. Also present at the meeting: Recreation Director/Committee Administrator Johnny Crossley, Washington County Forester Robert Nelson, Millstone Trails President Kevin Spaulding and MTA Rep Mark Martin, UVM Committee Intern Aidan Rowley (remote), Michael Monte (Town Attorney), Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Town Manager Chris Violette (remote), and Selectboard members Norma Malone and Justin Bolduc (remote).

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Larry Rogacki called the meeting to order, 6:03 pm
2. **Consider Approving Agenda:** Chair Larry Rogacki requested a motion be entertained to amend the agenda: Item 5b changed to 5a, item 5a changed to 5c, and the addition of an item for Carl Rogers be labeled as the new 5b. Josh Howard made a motion to approve the agenda with Larry's amendments. Jim West seconded the motion. Committee approved 6-0 (David Rouleau was not present at this vote)
3. **Consider Approving March 20th Meeting Minutes:** Dean Preston made a motion to approve the March 20th meeting minutes with one edit proposed by Jim West. Jim West seconded the motion. Committee approved 5-0, as Josh Howard abstained, and David Rouleau was not yet present.
4. **Receive Public Input:** No public input at this time.
5. **Updates from Recreation Director:**
 - a. Town Attorney Michael Monte responded to Committee inquiries regarding Certificate of Insurance and Corridor Management Agreements. After extensive discussion and several questions, Michael Monte informally proposed the committee should consider the \$2 million Certificate of Insurance as opposed to the \$1 million. Furthermore, extensive discussion took place regarding Appendix G: Sample Corridor Management Agreement and what will constitute future agreements. The Committee discussed a uniform contract versus tailoring a contract to a CMA holder. Michael Monte recommended maintaining flexibility with a CMA as the holders possess it for different purposes. CMA was originally modeled after the Agreements used by the State with snowmobile trails, hence "Corridor" Management Agreement.
 - b. There was miscommunication on why Carl Rogers was requested at the meeting. Carl was requested to provide his own noted revisions to the 2013 CFMP to aid

the Committee with his extensive knowledge of the history of the Forest. It was determined this would take place under item #7.

- c. UVM Intern Aidan Rowley and Rec Director provided a brief update on Town Forest Tour and Mapping Project. Aidan will walk the forest on March 31st, and the mapping project will start following the tour.

6. Finalize Public Survey

- a. After extensive committee input, the public survey was updated for the final time and is ready for distribution. Josh Howard made a motion to finalize the updated survey, pending UVM Intern Aidan Rowley's updates to the survey, which would be distributed after the meeting. Dean Preston seconded the motion.
- b. Methods of survey distribution were discussed. Johnny Crossley explained four different methods of survey distribution (see attachment below). The committee agreed to post the survey on the Town of Barre Website, the Recreation Facebook page, Front Porch Forum (Through Johnny's Government account), and post flyers around Town with a QR code and web link to the survey. In addition, the flyers and Town Website will include an option directing people to print out the survey and hand it in at the Town Offices.

7. Continue Review of Community Forest Management Plan

- a. The Committee requested Carl Rogers provide his noted revision to the 2013 CFMP. Carl retires from the Town Manager position next month. Carl began his review of the CFMP on page 17, *IV. Infrastructure* and finished on page 46 under *Trail Corridor Managers*. See attached revisions below.

8. **Tentative Agenda for April 10th Meeting:** Continue review of Community Forest Management Plan.
9. **Adjourn:** Josh Howard made a motion to adjourn. Jim West seconded the motion. Committee approved 7-0. Meeting adjourned 8:20pm.

Survey Distribution Methodology:

1. Online Distribution:

- a. Town of Barre Recreation Facebook
 - i. Other departments with FB can share to their followers as well.
 - ii. Groups like MTA can share to their followers.
 - iii. Ability to repost the survey to keep it in users feeds.
- b. Front Porch Forum
 - i. Johnny can post the survey on FPF.
 - ii. Ability to repost on FPF to keep it relevant and seen more.
- c. Committee Members
 - i. I'm sure some of you have FPF, FB, and/or other social media. Members could also post the survey. Broadens our reach.
- d. The Barre Partnership
 - i. Post to their Facebook.
 - ii. Reach out to Community Partners.

2. In- Person Drop Boxes:

- a. Establish Community Partners willing to host a survey drop box at their business.
 - i. General Stores in Barre Town
 - ii. Post Offices
 - iii. Hannaford
 - iv. Town Offices
 - v. The Barre Partnership
 - 1. Ask BP if they can solicit businesses willing to host a drop box.
- b. How would a drop box survey work?
 - i. Each location would receive a survey template, including several copies. If the business runs out of surveys, more can be printed by the business and/or Town of Barre.
 - ii. Each location receives a drop box and a flyer advertising the purpose of the survey. Businesses would be asked to locate the flyer, surveys, and drop box in a high traffic area. Encourage their customers to participate by filling out a survey and once complete dropping it in the drop box.

3. Mail Directly to the Public:

- a. There are 3,176 mailers (number gathered from last Town Newsletter sent out).
- b. Mail would require a high cost:
 - i. Postage assume \$0.60/per mailer = \$1,905.60
 - ii. Survey would need to be sent to a printer due to the amount of pages per survey. This could cost a couple hundred dollars pending printer specifications.

- iii. How would the public return the survey?
 1. Include a return envelope (more postage fees).
 2. Request the public drop off their completed survey at the Town offices.
 3. Request the public to mail and/or drop off their survey to the Town Offices.

4. *In-Person at Town forest Parking Areas*

- a. Create a sample framework of times and days of the week to conduct in person surveying at the entrances to the Forest. Committee members can volunteer time slots, in addition to Johnny and Aidan performing surveying.

- Promote a variety of forest types.
- Restore native ecosystem elements.
- Discourage or eliminate exotic elements invasive species.
- Maintain the existing trail network during forest management operations.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE

(see also Baseline Documentation Report)

General Topographic Description

The overall project area Forest consists of hilly to moderate terrain with some areas of ledge and steep slopes and several ravines. Elevation ranges from 1180 to 1640 feet. The proposed Barre Town Forest is greatly impacted by the ~~human history of use on~~ the history of human use of the site; mining of granite resulted in ponds, removal of soils and bedrock, and the formation of impressive talus piles. The intensive extraction of granite from the Property stopped over 100 years ago. In that time, natural communities have established on the human-altered landscape. The majority of the Property is forested, except for 25 abandoned quarries and a few cleared areas totaling 4.5 acres as shown on Map C: Aerial map. One headwater stream, one wetland, and ~~three~~ vernal pools are also on the Property.

Commented [JC1]: Number of vernal pools page 17

Scenic Values

The Barre Town Forest has numerous lookouts which provide terrific views of the Green Mountain Range, Camel's Hump, Barre City, and the forested hills to the east. The maples and birch on the property provide a stunning colorful display in the fall.

Roads

There are a limited number of forest roads and abandoned rail beds that are also used as snowmobile and mountain bike trails on the Property (see Map C: Access and Recreation Map and Appendix B: Survey). A private road off ~~Violette Street~~ that accesses the Websterville water plant crosses the Property.

Pedestrian access to the Property can be gained through frontage along the following town roads:

- Littlejohn Road
- Church Hill Road
- Violette Street
- Casanova Street
- Graniteville Road
- Barclay Quarry Road
- Donahue Road
- ~~Park Street~~
- ~~Waterman Street~~

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Two

~~Two access points/parking areas have been built. Two access points/parking areas are planned.~~
See the Proposed Action Schedule section and see Map C: Access and Recreation Map for potential parking and access areas.

Road maintenance objectives for interior forest roads include:

- ensuring safe conditions for a variety of uses, including logging and passive recreation;
- minimizing erosion and runoff;
- preventing illegal trespass by unauthorized motor vehicles;
- preventing the spread of invasive plants along trails and roads;
- minimizing increased avian predation and nest parasitism by minimizing the width, number, and extent of new access and skid roads; and
- minimizing disruption of wildlife habitat and recreation trails.

For information pertaining to trails, please see the Recreation Section of this Community Forest Plan.

Boundary Lines

Town roads bound a significant portion of the Barre Town Forest. Portions of the Property are bounded to the southwest by Graniteville Road, to the south by Barclay Quarry Road, to the northwest by Church Hill Road, to the northeast by Donahue Road, and to the west by Violette Street. A portion is also bisected by Littlejohn Road. The Barre Town Forest boundaries have been marked with "Leaving Town Forest" signs to help keep forest users from entering adjoining private property. The Town should replace the signs as needed.

V. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock and surficial geology help determine the location of aquifers, wetlands, and forests. Bedrock constituents have the potential to impact water quality, types and depth of soils, topography, vegetation, and potential for various uses. The materials that comprise bedrock vary in density and permeability. Water "pools" in some areas, while running quickly through other areas, creating aquifers (water-saturated areas underground) and wetlands. Fractures in the bedrock also provide sources for water supplies.

The Property lies in the Vermont Northern Piedmont bioregion, which is predominantly made up of limestone, schist and granite. The Property sits over a large intrusion of igneous rocks and their metamorphosed equivalents, including the granitic rock for which the Barre area has become famous. The Property also contains a category of bedrock described as calcareous elastic and metamorphosed rocks. This bedrock category leads to richer soils, characteristic of the Northern Vermont Piedmont biophysical region.

Soils

Soil types are important in managing timber due to differences in productivity and management limitations. Some soils are more fertile than others and thus, more productive. Productivity standards define which species will compete best on any given soil type and are useful when developing silvicultural prescriptions for specific stands. Also, certain soil types have management limitations that must be considered. Limitations are typically defined by a soil's

VIII. RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES

As maintenance and protection of biological diversity and integrity is a main stewardship goal for this Property, management activities will promote a forest that reflects a diversity of stand ages and naturally occurring forest types in a majority of the forest. Special attention will be given to the conservation of rare and exemplary natural communities, and the conservation and enhancement of native plant and animal species and their habitats, including the establishment and retention of a range of sizes and types of downed woody debris, snag trees, cavity trees, occasional very large or old trees, and early successional habitats.

No rare or unusual natural communities are known to exist on the Barre Town Forest. The abandoned quarries may provide habitat for rare or unusual amphibians and reptiles and should be surveyed during the appropriate season.

IX. WATER RESOURCES

Rivers and Streams

The Barre Town Forest is situated in the Winooski River watershed. The Property contains 1,838 feet of first order streams, according to GIS analysis of the state hydrology data. The northern portion of the Property contains the headwaters of Jail Branch, which drains into Stevens Branch, the Winooski River, and eventually, Lake Champlain.

Wetlands

There is a small wetland surrounded by hemlock-northern hardwood forest in the southeastern portion of the Property. The wetland is a mix of forested wetland, shrub-swamp, and emergent streamside vegetation. Wetlands are protected by the State of Vermont and all management activities will be designed to preserve their integrity.

Vernal Pools

There are three vernal pools identified on the Property, as shown on Map J: Natural Communities Map. These vernal pools are given special management consideration through the establishment of Primary and Secondary Special Treatment Areas (STAs) around the pools, as outlined in the Conservation Easement, and as described in the Timber Management section on page 22.

Commented [JC2]: Water Resources - Vernal pool number

Abandoned Quarries

There are 25 abandoned quarries on the Property, providing 14.9 acres of open water habitat for fish, waterfowl and amphibians.

X. RECREATION AND EDUCATION

Outdoor recreation is very important to the quality of life of Barre Town's residents and to the region's tourist economy (Barre Town Plan, 20082018). Section 6.1 of the Barre Town Plan calls for the maintenance, preservation, development, and upgrade of recreational opportunities including skiing, fishing, hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, bicycle/pedestrian paths, and snowmobiling. In multiple public meetings in 2010 and 2011, Barre Town's residents have identified recreation as a long-term management priority for the Barre Town Forest.

Trails throughout the Barre Town Forest connect people to the landscape, to the local history of Barre, and to each other, by providing a place for year-round recreation and cultural education. Due to its proximity to residential areas, the Wilson Industrial Park, the Barre Town School, the Barre Town Forest is easily accessible to a large number of residents for recreation and draws visitors from around central Vermont, New England, and beyond.

Recreation and recreation management must be guided by the permitted and restricted uses set forth in the conservation easement (Appendix B) and also should adhere to several other guiding principles. Through the terms of the Easement, passive, non-commercial public access is granted to the Property, provided it does not conflict with the other purposes of the Easement. Public access will benefit the local and regional tourist economy, provide educational and cultural opportunities, and provide health benefits for residents and visitors alike.

Passive Pedestrian Recreation

In accordance with the Easement, the Property shall be available to the public for all types of non-commercial, non-motorized, non-mechanized, non-equestrian, dispersed recreational purposes, including hiking, hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife viewing, skiing, snowshoeing, and environmental education.

Commented [JC3]: Passive pedestrian, trapping, is it included?

Equestrian, Mechanical, and Motorized Recreation

The following activities will be permitted provided that user groups can maintain trails consistent with the objectives of the Easement and the goals of this Community Forest Plan. Recreational uses such as snowmobiling, mountain biking, horseback riding, and ATV use are permitted only on designated trails and only at the discretion of the Town of Barre in accordance with the Easement. The current status of these forms of recreation is listed below.

Three snowmobile trails, operated by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), and currently locally managed by the Barre Town Thunder Chickens, cross the Property (see map C: Access and Recreation Map). Snowmobile trails can provide access to the Property to those who are disabled, elderly, or otherwise physically challenged. Snowmobiling will be limited to designated trails. The Town Recreation Board will work with the Barre Town Thunder Chickens (and VAST) on any maintenance or management issues relating to these trails or future snowmobile trails. As required by State Law, snowmobiles must be registered with the State. The Town of Barre does not intend to create any additional snowmobile trails at this time.

Mountain biking is allowed on designated trails only (see Map C). Mountain biking trails have been created for three abilities: beginners, intermediate and expert. Expert trails may contain

bridges, steep descents, and challenging terrain (See Appendix E for an inventory of Structures on the trails). Bikers are required to wear a helmet, ride in control and yield to other trail users. To minimize trail erosion, riding in muddy conditions is prohibited.

Currently there are no designated horseback riding trails but the Town Recreation Board will consider any proposals for the creation of such trails and will coordinate with designated Trail Corridor Managers, the Vermont Land Trust, and VHCB on the creation and location of any new designated trails for these uses. Single-track trails used by mountain bikers will not be considered suitable for horseback riding; horseback riding trails will be considered only on wider multi-use trails. Occasional riding on multi-use trails will be permitted until horseback riding trails are designated as use increases.

The Conservation Easement allows recreational use of ATVs and motorbikes only at the discretion of the Town and only on a designated connector trail that connects existing, legal networks of ATV trails. Such a connector trail will need to be reviewed and approved by Easement holders and may not have a significant, negative impact on the conservation values of the property. A local ATV club would need to be responsible for management and enforcing responsible use. Currently there are no designated trails for this use. See Appendix J for more details on the standards under which ATV use may be allowed.

Other motor vehicles may not be operated on the property except for uses specifically permitted under the Easement such as wildlife and habitat management, timber management, trail grooming, maintenance, handicap access, safety, or emergency purposes.

Trails

Historically, old logging roads and quarry roads were used by hikers, skiers, hunters and mountain bikers. The current single-track trail network was built by the Millstone Trail Association over the past 17 years. Trails have been located to minimize effects on streams and ponds (i.e. water-filled quarries). No additional trails are planned at this time. Any new trail construction will need to be approved by the Selectboard, Barre Town Recreation Board, and the Vermont Land Trust. Trails may be rerouted from their current location to decrease erosion and avoid hazards, wetlands, riparian areas or other sensitive natural features, or to create a larger buffer between trails and adjacent private land.

Commented [JC4]: Ask MTA if accurate?

Multi-use trails: Allowable uses are hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking, or other such approved use.

Single track trails: Allowable uses are hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and mountain biking.

Dogs are allowed on the Property in compliance with the Town ordinance (Town of Barre Animal Nuisance Control Ordinance, effective March 7, 2007). Dog owners or handlers must remove their dogs' waste from the Barre Town Forest.

Out of respect for abutting landowners, trails will be a minimum of 10 feet from property lines, or 25 feet if requested by abutting landowner. With landowner permission, trails may be closer than the minimum distance and also connect and continue on to private land.

~~The Town will coordinate with the Websterville Fire District regarding the use and maintenance of the private road that leads to the Websterville Water Plant in the interior of the Property.~~

All users of the Forest are required to abide by the Leave No Trace ethic (See Appendix F). Users must confine their activities to durable ground, carry out all trash, respect other users, respect wildlife and wildlife habitats, avoid protected areas, and minimize impact on natural resources.

Trail Corridor Managers

Designated Trail Corridor Managers (TCMs) will be required to obtain written permission from the Selectboard prior to using any existing trails within the boundaries of the Town Forest. Corridor Management Agreements will be created between the town and Trail Corridor Managers (see Appendix G for example Agreement.) These will be renewed annually after evaluation by the Recreation Board and Selectboard to ensure TCMs are fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in the Agreement. TCMs will be required to monitor trail use to ensure users abide by the rules outlined in this Community Forest Plan. TCMs will reference the Barre Town Forest in marketing and publicity materials for events that take place on the Barre Town Forest.

Trail Corridor Managers will be responsible for overseeing any repairs or improvements to existing trails and coordinating with other TCMs or other interest groups as necessary. Trails will be routed to avoid any adverse impact on wetlands, springs, riparian areas, vernal pools and other sensitive natural features. To prevent increased predation of birds and nest parasitism, trails will be less than 25 feet in width and, if possible, a forest canopy closure of greater than 70% will be maintained. Bridges, culverts, and other trail amenities will be installed and maintained as needed to minimize impacts on soil, water, and other resources, with approval by Barre Town Recreation Board. The Easement prohibits manipulation of natural water courses or other water bodies. All trails will be maintained in a manner to minimize environmental impact, be compatible with other uses in the forest, and be in accordance with the Easements, the VT Trails and Greenways Manual (2007), and other appropriate trail standards established by recognized recreational groups.

Commented [JC5]: See if VT trails and Greenways manual has been updated
Commented [JC6]: MTA uses IMBA for reference

Organized user groups of a particular activity can petition the Barre Town Selectboard to consider additional recreational activities, if they are consistent with the purposes of the Easement. However, activities more suitable to open, non-forested land and with recreation facilities that currently exist elsewhere in Barre town (such as volleyball courts or community gardens) are not considered appropriate in the Town Forest.

If there is an interest in developing other uses, enthusiasts of a particular activity could request a license from the Town to develop this activity, assuming it is consistent with the Conservation Easement. The cost of establishing these activities and the responsibility of maintaining them rests squarely on the groups interested in these activities and not on the town taxpayers. User

groups must provide proof of insurance which names the Town as additional insured. If the Selectboard or Recreation Board is not satisfied with the way these activities are being managed, they could withdraw the license.

The Recreation Board will annually monitor the forest, particularly the trails, for evidence of abuse or damage to natural systems due to recreational activities and will modify management recommendations and actions appropriately.

Trail Signage

Trail Corridor Managers are required to clearly mark designated trails in coordination with the Barre Town Recreation Board. Trails that continue onto private property will have signs that indicate a user is leaving the Town Forest. All signs are subject to approval by the Recreation Board. Trail maps of the Barre Town Forest can be obtained at the Town office and the Town of Barre's website.

Trail Fees

Trail Corridor Managers who wish to charge a fee for use of any trail located within the Barre Town Forest must get Town approval. The TCM applicant will apply for fee schedule approval from the Barre Town Recreation Board, which will make a recommendation to the Selectboard. The applicant will seek final approval from the Selectboard. See Appendix I for more details.

All trails on the Town Forest will be open to all hikers, snowshoers and dogwalkers, without cost.

Hunting, Trapping, Fishing and Collecting

Hunting is permitted in the Town Forest in compliance with the laws of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. A valid state hunting license is required. Hunting and other recreational and educational uses of this property do not need to conflict. Prudence dictates that precautions are exercised both by hunters and by non-hunting users, especially during rifle season for deer. Except for pedestrian use, trails will be closed from the beginning of rifle season until the end of muzzle loader season for deer. All tree stands are prohibited. Carry in-carry out ground blinds may be permitted within the Town Forest, but must be dismantled after use, following the Leave No Trace Guidelines, and requires written permission from the Barre Town Recreation Board. No live growth shall be cut or damaged to construct blinds or to create shooting lanes.

Trapping is allowed, as permitted and as directed by the Selectboard. (State law requires all trappers to get landowner permission.)

The killing of non-game animals or permanent removal of nests or plants, including wildflowers, is prohibited. Activities such as the limited collection of tree leaves, fern fronds, berries, fungi, fruits, algae, and lichen specimens are permitted for non-commercial, educational, and individual use. The Town may require a special use permit if there is concern for depletion of the resource, or if uncontrolled harvesting may have an adverse impact on the health of the forest.